TL 3033

STOP INDONESIA'S STARVATION STRATEGY IN EAST TIMOR
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
RELIEF MISSION URGENTLY NEEDED

An emergency message to friends and supporters of:
Amnesty International, Clergy & Laity Concerned, Friends of East Timor, American Friends Service Committee, TAPOL [U.S. Campaign for the Release of Indonesian Political Prisoners], Other concerned organizations and individuals.

Despite the information blackout the Indonesian military has tried to impose on the island, reports of Indonesian brutalities in East Timor continue to reach the outside world. Most recently, a Member of Parliament in Australia's ruling conservative coalition was quoted in the *Manchester Guardian* of September 14, 1978, as saying that 30,000 to 40,000 have died of starvation as a result of Indonesian use of crop defoliants in areas controlled by the FRETILIN independence movement. Norman Peagan wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on September 13, 1978 that "perhaps as many as 50,000 ... have died, many of them from disease or starvation." Letters smuggled out of East Timor by Catholic priests indicate that atrocities in Indonesian occupied areas continue.

In the three years since its full scale invasion of the island began, Indonesia has persisted in refusing the International Committee of the Red Cross entry into East Timor, a refusal that has earned Jakarta severe criticism from Nobel Prize winning Amnesty International and the United Nations. Foreign journalists are denied free access to East Timor. A U.N. call for a fact finding mission has been rejected by Indonesia. The Indonesian military prefers to take newsmen and foreign dignitaries on carefully guided tours of selected villages and towns, a tactic obviously aimed at convincing the world community that East Timor is at peace.

The Current Situation

Recent developments in East Timor are particularly disquieting. In early September, a group of diplomats and journalists was brought in to visit four towns controlled by Jakarta's military forces, three of them in Jakarta's hands for almost three years. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the diplomats — among them the U.S. ambassador to Indonesia — were shocked by what they witnessed: thousands of East Timorese, living in centers referred to by the Indonesian military as "transit camps" were suffering from advanced malnutrition and diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. According to an *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* report, the dignitaries were told by church aid workers **that in one area alone, 500 East Timorese have been dying per month.**

It is clear that Jakarta invited foreign diplomats to see this tragic display in a cynical effort to advance its position on the status of East Timor. Consider the following:

1) The shocked diplomats called for an immediate international relief operation for East Timor. **Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, who accompanied the diplomats, told reporters that relief aid would be accepted only if the donor nations recognized Indonesia's claim to sovereignty over East Timor — in short, moral blackmail.** The U.N. General Assembly, which has twice rejected Indonesia's claim to sovereignty, is slated to discuss the East Timor issue in early November. **The *Melbourne Sun* reported on September 7, 1978 that according to Indonesian sources, the diplomats' visit "was intended to get more support for Indonesia's cause" at the United Nations.**

2) Diplomatic sources at the United Nations say that the chief reason for the appalling condition of East Timorese in one of the places visited — the town of Remexio, which was captured by Indonesian forces only in late August — is Indonesia's use of defoliants in its campaign to take the town. The Indonesian tactic is reminiscent of the former American practice in Vietnam of laying waste to entire areas to deny the NLF its food base, and then using the refugees this policy generated to discredit the opposition. It is quite hypocritical for Indonesia to portray the malnourished of Remexio as "victims of FRETILIN," since it was Indonesia's invasion of East Timor that created current conditions in the country. **Furthermore, considerable fighting continues, as evidenced not only by Indonesia's defoliation effort, but also by the very location of Remexio: the town is less than ten miles from Dili, the Indonesian-controlled East Timor capital.**

East Timor Needs Non-Partisan Aid

Foreign humanitarian aid must be channelled through an independent, non-partisan agency such as the International Committee of the Red Cross if we are to be sure that the aid will be distributed; corruption within the Indonesian military is legendary. **In a recent interview (in the Indonesian newsweekly *Tempo*, July 8, 1978), even the current Indonesian-sponsored governor of East Timor confirmed that very little money appropriated for East Timor reaches the people**

there. Moreover, an Indonesian government whose callousness and negligence has resulted in two famines over the last year — in West Java and the island of Flores — does not inspire any confidence. Finally, the Indonesian Red Cross, which is now operating in East Timor and would presumably be the recipient of foreign aid under the Indonesian plan, is run by the military government and headed by a general. Neither the United Nations nor Amnesty International consider the Indonesian Red Cross to be an independent agency.

THE U.S.ROLE

The Carter Administration has backed Indonesia's continuing attempt to subjugate East Timor, with both political support and war material ($100 million in military aid for fiscal years 1978 and 1979, including such items as counter insurgency aircraft). Nonetheless, the administration has stated on at least four occasions that it would "encourage" Indonesia to admit humanitarian organizations — such as the International Committee of the Red Cross — into East Timor. This has been the only concession — rhetorical as it is until this time — that the administration has made in response to the horrifying reports that have filtered out of East Timor. **It is up to American citizens to apply pressure on Washington to exert its influence on an Indonesian regime that has received hundreds of millions of U.S. aid dollars since it came to power in 1965. The Indonesian military has had more than enough time and money to set up adequate relief facilities in East Timor, and has not done so.**

Indonesia continues to hold tens of thousands of political prisoners, most of them for thirteen years without trial — more political prisoners that any other developing country aligned with the United States.

From the ***Far Eastern Economic Review,*** September 29, 1978. "Timor's arithmetic of despair":

'The townspeople are undernourished and desperatelv in need of medical attention ... (T)uberculosis is a major problem, and with so many people sleeping on the damp ground at night there is danger of widespread pneumonia. The children in Remexio are so undernourished that one ambassador said they reminded him of victims of an African famine.'

"Remexio is a singularly depressing place. It is not, however, by any means unique. Timorese officials (in the Indonesian administration) say that there are 14 similar 'transit camps' ... many of them worse than Remexio. 'This is nothing', said one official. 'At Suai things are much worse and there are many more people. There is an urgent need for humanitarian aid.'"

"There is a serious shortage of food, medicine and clothing. compounded by the problem of 'bureaucratic leakages,' the Indonesian euphemism for corruption."

From the ***Sydney Morning Herald,*** September 11, 1978:

"Indonesia is looking for foreign aid for East Timor but the Foreign Minister, Professor Kusumaatmadja, who accompanied the party, indicated the donor countries must acknowledge Indonesia's sovereignty"

From the ***Australian.*** September 12, 1978.

Australian Labor Senator Ken Fry said that "Indonesia must take full responsibility for the suffering of the East Timorese."

Government Senator Bernard Kilgariff said that "Indonesian actions in East Timor had been nothing short of genocide."

WHAT CAN BE DONE

*Write—and if possible send mailgrams **in addition to** letters—to the State Department Office of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. **Stress that the United States must bring immediate pressure on Indonesia to admit the International Red Cross into East Timor, and that the ICRC must be allowed access to *all* areas of East Timor.** Send copies of your letter to the officials listed below. **Letters are urgently needed.**

*Alert friends and any organizations you may know of. Send them copies of this notice. Encourage them to write too.

***Send us copies of your letter.** Let us know of your interest by returning the form below.

*Send a contribution if you can.

***ACT QUICKLY.**

WRITE TO: Patricia M. Derian, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State, 2201 C St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20520

SEND COPIES TO: Honorable Donald M. Fraser, House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Helen Meyner, House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515

Richard C. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State, 2201 C St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20520

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RETURN TO: Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Indonesia and Self-Determination in East Timor, Box 27, Thurston Court Apts., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Name _____

Address _____

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Enclosed is a contribution of $ _____.
Please make checks payable to "Emergency Committee."

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